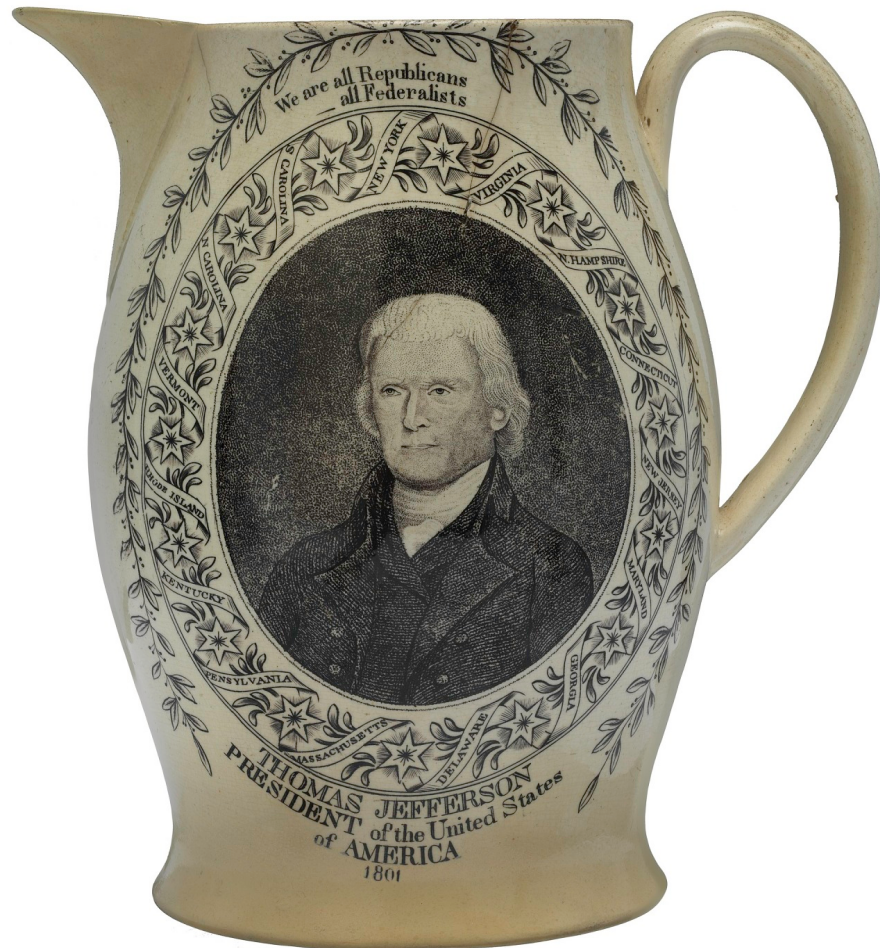


Political Parties?

The Revolutionary generation opposed organized political parties that promoted the interests of only one part of “the people.” True patriots, they believed, should put aside self-interest and narrow views to promote the good of the whole society. But Federalists and Republicans found themselves bitterly divided in the 1790s. When working men, small and middling farmers, slaveholders, and petty dealers formed Democratic-Republican Societies, Federalists attacked them as dangerously radical. President George Washington denounced them as unrepresentative groups.

Democratic Republican Societies

Newly elected President Thomas Jefferson sought to heal the bitter feelings resulting from divisions of the past decade in his inaugural address of 1801. This pitcher paraphrased his effort to bring the two parties together: “We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists.” A lampoon of one Democratic-Republican Society illustrates the era’s partisan hostility. It showed some recognizable figures and types of the day: Jefferson orating, David Rittenhouse looking through a telescope, an African American addressed as “Citizen Mungo,” and the Devil enjoying the scene.



Pitcher, "Jefferson"

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Detail from "A Peep into the Antifederal Club," unknown artist, New York, 1793

Courtesy of John Carter Brown Library at Brown University

Hours & Admission

Open every day, except December 25, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Admission is free and no tickets are required.

Location & Contact

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